

2002 ANNUAL REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

Important Facts about the 2002 Index Total:

After the first nine months of 2002, a projected increase of four to six percent increase in Serious Crime for the year in Cambridge appeared to be a certain bet. The projected rise in crime never came to fruition because of an especially quiet fourth quarter that registered an eleven percent decrease when compared with the same time period last year. The final count – there were **sixteen fewer serious crimes (-.4% decrease)** when calculated against the 2001 numbers. The 4404 serious crimes reported in Cambridge in 2002 represent the third lowest index recorded in the City since 1970. The Serious Crime Index in Cambridge has not varied from a final total of between 4350 and 4450 incidents for six consecutive years. **Violent crime increased by seven percent and property crime fell one percent in 2002.** However, further analysis reveals that the total of 495 violent crimes in 2002 marks only the second time since 1970 that the combined total of Murders, Rapes, Assaults and Robberies was below 500 incidents for the year in Cambridge.

Murder:

- The last time Cambridge recorded as many as six murders in a calendar year was in 1989 when seven were reported.
- In 1973, there were ten murders committed in Cambridge. The highest total of homicides in Cambridge in the past thirty years was in 1972 when 14 murders were registered.
- Murders in Cambridge usually fall into three situational types: domestic, drug or gang related, and homeless against homeless.
- Nationally, cities of 100,000 people average 10 murders per year.
- Two of the six murders in the City in 2002 remain under investigation. Seven of the twenty-nine murder cases reported in Cambridge since 1990 remain unsolved.

Rape:

- The total of ten rapes reported in Cambridge in 2002 represents a 30-year nadir.
- In an average year, the investigative unit clears 70 to 80 percent of all reported rapes. The Sexual Assault Unit reports that nine of the ten cases in 2002 were cleared by arrest.
- Prior to 1998, Cambridge averaged four to seven stranger to stranger rapes each year, two to four were usually street abductions or “blitz” rapes, one or two are usually home invasions, and the remainder are “contact” rapes. In the four years since 1998, there have been a combined total of four blitz rapes and two classifications as home invasions.
- Since 1980, there has only been one stranger-to-stranger “street” rape pattern in Cambridge: the “Rainy Day Rapist” who struck the Fresh Pond area in 1981.
- Nationally, cities with a population of 100,000 residents record an average of 35 rapes per year.
- Further analysis of “blitz” type rapes in Cambridge over the past few years indicates a trend of weekend night incidents between the hours of midnight and 4AM.

Robbery:

- In 2002, there were 195 robberies reported which translates to an 8% increase when compared with the 2001 total.
- Central Square, the periphery of Harvard Square, Hoyt Field and the Somerville border of the Agassiz neighborhood were considered “hot spots” for street robberies in Cambridge during 2002.
- About 40 percent of all street robberies are “predatory robberies” or “muggings,” in which one or two offenders approach someone with a weapon or threat of weapon and demand money.
- From 1970 to 1990, Cambridge averaged 100 commercial robberies per year. Since 1991, that average has plummeted to 33 per year. However, a spike in bank robberies that materialized after September 11th of 2001 and resurfaced during the fourth of quarter of 2002 produced the highest total for this crime type in a number of years.

Burglary:

- Housebreaks, which had shot up 66% in the first quarter of 2002, and were recording a 44%, incline after the first six months of the year, ended with a 6% decline when compared with 2001.
- Two of the more prominent housebreaks patterns were identified in the Agassiz neighborhood during the first and third quarters of the year. Further analysis reveals that the apprehension of two serial burglars eradicated this series of incidents.
- A dramatic surge in Commercial Breaks within the borders of Central Square (29% Of the Citywide total) during October and November helped propel a 47% rise in this crime type.

Larceny:

- The crime of larceny accounts for 62 percent of the total crime index.
- The larceny total of 2740 incidents represents the lowest total reported in Cambridge in twenty years.
- Larceny from motor vehicles has consistently averaged close to 20% of the serious crime total in Cambridge each year. The 2002 total is consistent with this trend.
- The 2002 total of 521 larcenies from buildings represents a 40% decline from the numbers that this target crime generated a decade ago.
- Larcenies from persons are concentrated around commercial areas, with Harvard Square producing the greatest totals.
- For the third consecutive year, larceny of bicycles declined in Cambridge.

Auto Theft:

- Auto theft continues to decline in Cambridge. This year’s number represents the second lowest total in 40 years.
- Toyotas and Hondas account for 32% of all stolen vehicles in Cambridge each year. The Honda Accord and the Toyota Camry are the two most targeted models.
- Fifty-one percent of all stolen vehicles in Cambridge are recovered within 24- hours of the theft.